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The Writers' Room

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Episode 12: All Things in Murderation

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EPISODE 12: All Things In Murderation

Standards of Behavior contains mature language, content and themes. Please listen with care.

1. INT. DISCIPLINARY HEARING. Water POURING. A pen CLICKS.

HEARING MODERATOR

Ms. Michaels, I would now like to discuss your day leading up to the incident. Did anything of interest occur BEFORE you left for the party?

CHARLOTTE

What do you mean by "of interest"?

HEARING MODERATOR

Did you notice anything odd about Ms. Jennings' behavior? Any of your friends, for that matter?

CHARLOTTE

No, not that I can recall?

HEARING MODERATOR

No arguments? No drama, for lack of a better word?

CHARLOTTE

I didn't even see anyone until Allison and I left for the party.

HEARING MODERATOR

So, by your account, everything...everyone seemed fine?

CHARLOTTE

It was just a normal day...for me at least.

2. FLASHBACK. Allison's apartment. Social media SOUNDS. KNOCKING on a door.

CHARLOTTE

Al? Al! Are you in there? OPEN UP!

JANGLING of the lock. Door OPENS.

ALLISON

Charlotte! It's kind of early,
isn't it? It's barely six-o'clock

CHARLOTTE

I know. I just...I think we need to
talk.

ALLISON

(Laughing)

What? Want to get a head start on
the pre-game?

CHARLOTTE

No, Al. This is serious. Can I come
in?

ALLISON

(Somberly)

Charlotte, you're worrying me. You
don't look so good.

Charlotte steps inside. Door CLOSES.

ALLISON (CON'D)

What's going on? You aren't having
second thoughts about Jack, are
you?

CHARLOTTE

No! Not at all! Well, not second
thoughts...exactly. Just...a change
in perspective.

ALLISON

Okay?

CHARLOTTE

Are you sure that confronting Jack
is the best idea?

ALLISON
Charlotte...

CHARLOTTE
(Sympathetically)
Hear me out. Please.

ALLISON
(Sighs)
Go on...

CHARLOTTE
I think there could be more to
this. More than just getting in
Jack's face and letting him have
it.

ALLISON
I'm not going to the police!

A BEAT.

CHARLOTTE
No, I know that. But what if the
police came to you? What if we
could expose Jack without revealing
who you are?

ALLISON
That's impossible.

CHARLOTTE
No, it's not.

Papers RUSTLING.

ALLISON
What's this?

CHARLOTTE
It's the university's Code of
Conduct.

ALLISON

Decided to do a little light reading? What's next? The manual for the soft serve machine in the dining hall?

CHARLOTTE

Shut up, this is serious. Just look at the page I have marked. Read what I highlighted!

ALLISON

"It is the duty of the university to create a safe environment to enforce our policies and protect our campus population. Because of this, students can choose to remain anonymous when reporting incidents of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Students names and information will not revealed at any point, and the student only has to appear for preliminary hearings and statements."

ALLISON (CON'D)

Is this true?

A BEAT.

CHARLOTTE

(Excitedly)

Yes! Al, you can really make a difference. You can make sure that this never happens again. At least not with Jack.

ALLISON

(Crying)

I...I don't know if I can do this.

CHARLOTTE

You are one of the strongest and bravest people that I know. If I had been in your shoes...I don't know what I would have done. But I do know that I would never want anyone else to have to go through it.

ALLISON

He's a monster, you know that, right?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, I really do.

ALLISON

He hurt me, more than I think anyone knows. And God knows who else he's done this to.

ALLISON (CON'D)

I want to do it.

CHARLOTTE

It's not going to be easy. People won't know who you are...but Jack will. You have to see him during the hearing.

ALLISON

I want him to see me. I want him to see that what we did doesn't have any power over me...not anymore.

Charlotte and Allison EMBRACE.

CHARLOTTE

I am so proud of you.

ALLISON

Thank you for doing this for me.

A BEAT.

CHARLOTTE

Now, I need to ask a favor.

ALLISON

Whatever it is, the answer is yes.

CHARLOTTE

Let me write about this.

ALLISON

Excuse me?

CHARLOTTE

Let me write about what Jack did. I won't use names, of course. Think of it as an expose of all the terrible things on campus that no one ever talks about.

ALLISON

No. Al...

CHARLOTTE

(Loudly)

ALLISON!

A BEAT.

CHARLOTTE (CON'D)

I SAID NO!

ALLISON

You come in here with this big plan...this plan to save poor, defenseless Allison. You can finally tell your side of the story. You can finally get justice...blah, blah, blah. The only reason you're even trying to help me is so you can be a big-shot with the newspaper.

CHARLOTTE.

Allison, I care about you. I want to see Jack pay for what he made you go through.

ALLISON

Get out.

CHARLOTTE

I am so sor-

ALLISON

(Screaming)

GET OUT!

Door SLAMMING. Social media NOISES.

END FLASHBACK.

3. INT. DISCIPLINARY HEARING.

HEARING MODERATOR

Ms. Michaels, you recently applied for a position with the campus newspaper, is that correct?

CHARLOTTE

(Meekly)

Yes, I did.

HEARING MODERATOR

And you were editor-in-chief for your previous institution's newspaper. Quite impressive.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you.

HEARING MODERATOR

All of this makes me wonder, why did you miss the deadline to submit your writing sample?

CHARLOTTE

What? How...

HEARING MODERATOR

We take these hearing very seriously, Ms. Michaels. We look at grades, extracurriculars, anything that could show abnormal or concerning behavior.

A BEAT.

HEARING MODERATOR (CON'D)

So why did you miss the deadline? Your application was submitted. You had an interview all lined up. Considering you were editor-in-chief, you had to have SOMETHING you could have submitted.

CHARLOTTE

(In a daze)

I was working on a new story...

HEARING MODERATOR

What happened with that? The story, I mean.

CHARLOTTE

It was a dead-end. Just a rabbit hole that I went too far down.

4. FLASHBACK. INT. Charlotte's apartment. TYPING. A recorder turns ON.

CHARLOTTE

Okay. Test one, two. Test one, two. Brainstorming session one. Here we go.

Charlotte BREATHES DEEPLY.

CHARLOTTE (CON'D)

What makes a person evil? Maybe evil is the wrong word. What makes a person bad? Bad in the sense that they know right from wrong, but choose to live otherwise. Are they bad because of how they were raised? Are they bad because of

CHARLOTTE (CON'D)

their own choices? Our campus, our safe, warm campus, is playing host to some bad people. They lie. They cheat. They move through life with no regard for their actions or the consequences. They cannot see how one small choice can create a ripple, that turns into a wave, that turns in a tsunami crashing into someone else's life.

A BEAT.

CHARLOTTE (CON'D)

I'm new here, just moved here this semester. In the short time I have been on campus, I met a truly wonderful person. Kind, smart, and wickedly funny. But they have a secret. A secret that is eating away at them, making them less kind, duller, an empty shell of who they used to be. They were hurt. And for a long time, no one else knew they were hurting. They tried to hide it. They tried to move on, but they couldn't. A bad person made a choice that could have ruined the life of someone who has become very dear to me. I cannot let that happen. They deserve to be heard. I want to give them their voice back.

SIGH. A PAUSE.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

We all live nice lives here. We can go to school. We live in...decent dorms. We have friends. We have opportunities. And some of us take advantage of that. Some of us see this campus as a hunting ground. We prey on the insecurities and shortcomings of our fellow students. We take advantage of each other. This type of behavior has to end. We cannot stand idly by while more people are pushed into the dirt. We have the ability to make lasting change. We can make this campus one where bad people are not welcome and will not be tolerated. But we all have to stand together, as one, and show those who choose to make bad decisions that those choices are no longer acceptable. I, for one, will not ignore the signs while other students get hurt like Al-

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Like Allison.

SNIFFLES.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

What am I doing? I can't do this to Allison.

Button being PRESSED.

VOICE

Are you sure you want to delete this file?

Button PRESSED.

VOICE (CONT'D)

Voice file deleted.

DIALING a phone. RINGING.

CHARLOTTE

Allison. Please don't hang up. I am
so, so sorry.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

5. INT. DISCIPLINARY HEARING.

HEARING MODERATOR

From what we have gathered so far,
the party seemed to have taken
place on the main-level of the
house, correct?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, everyone was in the living
room, kitchen, or outside.

HEARING MODERATOR

So you never saw anyone go
upstairs? Toward the bedrooms?

CHARLOTTE

Not that I can recall- The drinks
and the bathroom were downstairs,
so that's where everyone wanted to
be.

HEARING MODERATOR

Did you ever go upstairs?

CHARLOTTE

Excuse me?

HEARING MODERATOR

Did you go upstairs? Maybe to find
someone? Look for another bathroom
if there was a line for the one
downstairs?

CHARLOTTE

No, I never went upstairs.

6. FLASHBACK. INT. PARTY. Loud MUSIC.

CHARLOTTE

Sofi. Sofi! Do you know where I
could go to rinse this off?

SOFI

Ummm...it looks like the line for
the bathroom is hella' long. Maybe
go check the bathroom upstairs?

CHARLOTTE

You're the best.

Charlotte HUGS Sofi.

SOFI

(Laughing too loudly)
Yeah...I am the best.

Social media NOISES.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

7. INT. DISCIPLINARY HEARING.

HEARING MODERATOR

You're sure that no one went
upstairs? Not Allison? Maybe Will
or Roy?

CHARLOTTE

I was with them most of the night.
We never went upstairs.

8. INT. UPSTAIRS OF PARTY. MUSIC ECHOES FROM
DOWNSTAIRS.

CHARLOTTE

Bathroom. Bathroom. Which door is
it?

DOOR OPENING.

JACK

You better get out here, you stupid
bit-

CHARLOTTE

Excuse me? I'm just looking for the
bathroom.

JACK

Oh. I thought you were. Never-mind.
How's it going, baby?

CHARLOTTE

First, gross. Who still says baby?
Second, I just need the bathroom.

JACK

Ahh. Got a stain on your shirt?
Need help taking that thing off?
I'm pretty good with taking off
other things too.

CHARLOTTE

Don't come any closer.

JACK

Come on, baby.

CHARLOTTE

I'm not your baby. And judging by
that cut on your head, neither is
the other person you tried to come
on to tonight.

JACK

Loosen up. It's a party. You've
gotta have some fun.

CHARLOTTE

I'm leaving.

Jack GRABS Charlotte's arm.

JACK

It will be a night you won't
regret.

CHARLOTTE
(Yelling)
Allison regrets it!

A BEAT.

JACK
(Emotionless)
What did you say?

CHARLOTTE
Allison regrets the night she had
with you.

JACK
You have no idea what you're
talking about.

CHARLOTTE
Actually, I do. Allison is finally
talking about what you did.

JACK
She's a lying piece of sh-

CHARLOTTE
No, you're the piece of shit.

JACK
I think you need to leave now.
Seems like you've had enough. I'm
cutting you off.

CHARLOTTE
We aren't finished.

JACK
Get out. Now. Or I'll the police.

CHARLOTTE
What happens when Allison finally
calls the police?

JACK
You-

CHARLOTTE

What are you going to say then? She told me it felt good? We were both into it? I'd been drinking too. She never SAID NO.

Jack MOVES toward the door. Charlotte SLAMS the door SHUT.

JACK

You're a crazy bitch.

CHARLOTTE

What's crazy is that you thought you could keep getting away with this.

JACK

I'm not getting away with anything. I've never met a girl that could say no to me.

CHARLOTTE

Probably because she couldn't say anything at all.

A BEAT.

JACK

You're a little tease.

CHARLOTTE

(Yelling)
AND YOU'RE A RAPIST!

PAUSE.

CHARLOTTE

It's time we finally start calling it like it is. If you were black or poor or anything other than white and middle-class, we could have called you a rapist a long time ago. You would have been in jail a long time ago. This would have been over before it even started. You can't hide anymore. I know you might think you can Brock Turner your way out of this one, but you can't. This wasn't a one time thing. A lapse in judgment. I know about Allison. And that bloody nose makes it seem like someone else knows too. You're time is up, Jack.

JACK

(Quietly)

I don't know what you're talking about.

CHARLOTTE

I am talking about the certain level of privilege you carry around that let's you think taking advantage of drunk girls is okay. They didn't want you. None of them wanted you. They would have ran through this door as fast as possible if they could have. But they couldn't. So you did to them what you did to them and kicked them out as soon as you could. I bet you don't even remember them.

JACK

(Quietly)

I remember...

CHARLOTTE

Good. You'll need to remember when people start asking questions.

Jack begins to CRY.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Oh baby, don't do that. You need to smile, you look much prettier when you smile.

Jack HITTING THE GROUND.

CHARLOTTE

Jack? Jack! What's happening?!
HELP!

JACK

(Seizure noises)

CHARLOTTE

Oh my God. Someone help! Someone...

JACK

(Seizure noises grow softer)

CHARLOTTE

I need to get help...Jack's...Jack?

JACK

(Murmuring from the floor)

CHARLOTTE

I'm going to go find someone. I'm going to get help. Where's my pho...

KNOCKING ON THE DOOR.

FEMALE VOICE OUTSIDE THE DOOR

(Drunkenly)

Jack? Hellllloooo?! I got your text. You told me to come up here? You said you had something for me.

Charlotte CRACKS the door.

FEMALE VOICE OUTSIDE THE DOOR

(CONT'D)

(Drunkenly)

Who *hiccup* are you?

CHARLOTTE

Jack's too drunk. You need to leave.

FEMALE VOICE OUTSIDE THE DOOR

(Drunkenly)

But...but he told me that he...

CHARLOTTE

Yeah. He probably did. But he needs to sleep this off.

DOOR CLOSES.

JACK

(Mumbling)

He...help...

CHARLOTTE

You don't deserve help.

JACK

You...have to...

CHARLOTTE

Goodbye, Jack.

FOOTSTEPS. DOOR CLOSING.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

9. INT. DISCIPLINARY HEARING.

HEARING MODERATOR

I think we are almost finished here. I just have one final question.

CHARLOTTE

Yes?

HEARING MODERATOR

Were you aware of the allegations levied against Mr. Malvolio prior to his death?

CHARLOTTE

What allegations?

HEARING MODERATOR

Providing alcohol to minors,
physical abuse...sexual assault?

CHARLOTTE

I had no idea.

HEARING MODERATOR

Yes, it seems that Mr. Malvolio has
quite the track record.

CHARLOTTE

(Firmly)

He seemed so...sweet.

HEARING MODERATOR

If it hadn't been for the death of
Mr. Malvolio, he would have faced
charges. Someone came forward the
day his body was found.

CHARLOTTE

(Whispering)

Allison.

HEARING MODERATOR

What was that?

CHARLOTTE

Just thinking out loud. Are we
finished here?

HEARING MODERATOR

Are you sure you have nothing else
to add?

CHARLOTTE

Nothing. Nothing at all.

THE END.